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NSC review
completed

3 December 1971

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Text of [] Saigon Message []
Dated 2 December 1971

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REFS : A. [] Message []
30 November 1971

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B. Saigon [] Cable dated 29 November 1971

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C. [] Message Number []
30 November 1971

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"Text of Ref A was shown to Ambassador Bunker morning
2 December. Ambassador also shown revised version of Ref B,
which incorporates suggestions Ref A. Ambassador saw no
problem with revised version.

"Following now represents guidelines for anticipated
4 Dec 71 telephone call:

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"Note: []

it is important that we attempt to get the initiative in the conver-
sation and stress the following:

"A. Have you discussed our proposal of 27 Nov []

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[] and if so do you have an answer
and any information for us. Note: It is possible that our
one for one exchange [] will have
been accepted and therefore it will not be necessary to
cover all the points below. However, if the caller returns
to his normal pattern then we must interrupt with the following:

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"B. Please let me talk! We have spent considerable
time reviewing our conversation of 27 Nov and we would like
to make the following points:

DPMO review(s) completed.

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State Dept. review completed SECRET/ []

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"1) We are prepared to release [redacted]
[redacted] on 10 Dec repeat 10 Dec at 1600 hours repeat
1600 hours at Ta Quang Robon [redacted]
[redacted] Are you prepared to go ahead with
this exchange?

"2) If you have already received a list of
Americans, foreigners and Vietnamese officers
[redacted] you
should give this list [redacted] when you re-
lease him on 10 Dec. This will make things move
faster and will assist us in working out the details
of future exchanges [redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

[redacted] We are willing to discuss his
exchange and to work out the details, but for this we
need the list of American, foreigners and ARVN
officers that you now hold prisoner. In this regard
you should remember that there are also other
individuals in custody in South Vietnam who we are
sure you are interested in exchanging. [redacted]

[redacted] Note: If
the caller tries to interrupt he should be asked politely
but firmly to listen for the moment so that our side can
make its views known.

"3) In your call of 27 Nov you kept referring to an
agreement relating to the release of Sgt. John Sexton, Jr.
We would like to make it clear that you released
Sgt. Sexton on your own initiative without giving us any
forewarning or without any prior discussions, notifications
or agreements. We believe it is important that you recognize
that the release of Sgt. Sexton was the beginning of
this series of secret exchanges but it in no way represents
any part of an agreement reached in advance. Do you
understand? Good. We suggest therefore in order to show
sincerity on both sides we must start from the same point.
Therefore, we recommend that you consider our proposals
as we put them forth. We in turn will carefully study each
of your proposals and when these are sound we will know
what to do. We will act promptly and with sincerity. Do
you understand? We are convinced that our relationship
would be more productive if we could communicate in a
more satisfactory manner. We suggest therefore direct

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face-to-face meetings in Saigon. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Can you agree to a meeting in Saigon? If not, where can we meet? Note: At this point the caller will undoubtedly go into his routine which most likely will be laced with words such as 'agreements,' 'promises,' etc., etc. Therefore, without being rude or shutting him off we will listen until we can logically interrupt to re-emphasize that the desired exchanges cannot take place unless we are on common ground from the outset. It is hoped that this will clarify why the other side keeps referring to an agreement. [REDACTED]

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In addition to above guidelines we will cover in detail logistical aspects of actual exchange namely time, place, signaling, etc.

"Station Chief talked to General Abrams 1 December who was completely briefed by General Potts. General Abrams was pleased with Station Chief briefing and was in complete accord with manner in which things were being handled.

"Text of Ref C also shown to Ambassador Bunker, and he has no problems with it."